



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

SEP 30 2004

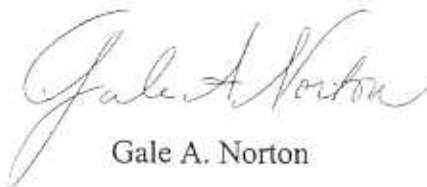
The Honorable Juan N. Babauta
Governor of the Commonwealth
of the Northern Mariana Islands
Saipan, MP 96910

Dear Governor Babauta:

President George W. Bush joins me in offering our fellow Americans in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands best wishes on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the battles for Saipan and Tinian. We at the Department of the Interior regard our role as the guardian of the American Memorial Park a unique honor and privilege. The residents of the Commonwealth are to be congratulated for holding this celebration to commemorate the historic battles that helped end the war in the Pacific.

While my schedule does not permit me to attend the upcoming event in June, I was pleased to have participated in the groundbreaking for the new American Memorial Park's Visitor Center in January when I visited Saipan. As I toured the Memorial Park, I was overwhelmed with the solemn and majestic ways in which it pays tribute to American military personnel who lost their lives in those conflicts. I am confident that the beautiful new Visitor Center will be an important addition to the Park and contribute to the overall appreciation of those who visit this wonderful memorial.

Sincerely,



Gale A. Norton